

VOLUME 6 SURVEILLANCE

CHAPTER 2 PART 121, 135, AND 91 SUBPART K INSPECTIONS

Section 11 Manuals Inspections for Parts 121 and 135 (PTRS Code 1621)

6-422 GENERAL. Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) requires operators to prepare and keep current various manuals and checklists for the direction and guidance of flight and ground personnel conducting air transportation operations. Each operator is required to maintain a complete manual (or set of manuals) at its principal base of operations and to furnish a complete manual (or set of manuals) to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certificate-holding district office (CHDO). An operator's manual must be reviewed by principal operations inspectors (POIs) and other qualified inspectors to ensure adequate content and compliance with applicable regulations, safe operating practices, and the operator's operations specifications (OpSpecs). While inspectors are encouraged to provide guidance and advice to operators in the preparation of their manuals, the development and production of an acceptable manual is solely the responsibility of the operator. This section contains information about the definitions and regulations concerning different manuals and direction and guidance to be used by inspectors when conducting manuals inspections of part 121 and 135 operators.

6-423 BACKGROUND DEFINITIONS. Inspectors should have knowledge of the following regulations, definitions, and guidance concerning the various types of manuals and guidance materials.

A. Flight Manual. Title 14 CFR part 121, section (§) 121.141 or part 135, § 135.81(c) (as applicable), and 14 CFR part 91, § 91.9(b) require that an FAA-approved flight manual be carried aboard each aircraft for the guidance of crewmembers when conducting flight operations. A flight manual is any manual approved by the FAA that an operator uses to comply with this requirement. A flight manual may either be an approved Airplane Flight Manual (AFM), an approved Rotorcraft Flight Manual (RFM), or an approved Company Flight Manual (CFM). POIs must review an operator's flight manuals to ensure that the manuals contain adequate direction and guidance for those operations the operator conducts and for the environment in which the operations are conducted (see volume 3, chapter 32, section 5).

B. General Manual. Sections (§§) 121.133 and 135.21 require that each operator (except part 135 single pilot operators and those operators granted a deviation from this requirement) prepare and keep current a manual providing guidance for all categories of flight and ground personnel conducting air transportation operations. The manual required by §§ 121.133 and 135.21 is termed the General Manual. The operator's general manual must include the duties and responsibilities of each category of employee. The general manual must also include adequate policy, direction, and guidance for the safe and efficient performance of the duties assigned to each category of employee. In practice, a system of manuals is required to meet both operational and airworthiness regulatory requirements, even for relatively simple operations. When the general manual is subdivided into more than one part, the segment of all portions applicable to operations is termed the General Operations Manual (GOM).

C. Guidance Material. Inspectors should become thoroughly familiar with the contents of Volume 3, Chapter 32, Manuals, Procedures, and Checklists for Parts 91K, 121, 125, and 135, in this handbook before conducting a manuals review. Inspectors should direct particular attention to Chapter 32 Section 2, Approval and Acceptance of Manuals and Checklists.

6-424 PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING OPERATIONS MANUALS. A principal inspector or an assigned representative must review an operator's manuals before issuing an operating certificate and periodically thereafter. Inspectors should use the following procedures when reviewing the manuals:

A. Initial Review. A comprehensive review of flight manuals and the GOM must be conducted by the POI and other assigned inspectors before the initial certification of an applicant. During the initial review of these manuals, POIs must ensure that the operator has addressed the applicable topics discussed in volume 3, chapter 15, sections 5 and 12 of this handbook. In addition, those items in the operator's final compliance statement which require the operator to develop a policy statement, system, method, or procedure, must be addressed in these manuals. If user manuals are furnished, those topics which apply to the specific user must be addressed. Each topic must be presented with enough detail to ensure that the user can properly carry out the portion of the policy or procedure for which the user is responsible. To record this function in the Program Tracking and Reporting Subsystem (PTRS), the inspector should enter activity code 1302, with a "1202" in the tracking field.

NOTE: If an inspector from another district office reviews the manual for the POI, the inspector must enter it in the PTRS as code 1302, and as 1245 in the tracking field.

B. Review of Changes to Manuals. The POI or a designated inspector must review each revision or proposed revision to a manual, checklist, or procedure (see volume 3, chapter 32, section 2), and use the applicable guidance that follows:

1) **Approval of Manual Changes.** Changes to manuals or sections of manuals or checklists which require approval must be approved by the FAA in writing before the operator can use the change. POIs should endeavor to review approved material in a timely manner.

2) **Acceptance of Manual Changes.** Only a portion of an operator's manuals are "approved" by the FAA, while the remaining portions are "accepted" by the FAA. The operator may begin using accepted portions of a manual once the change is delivered to the CHDO. POIs should attempt to review changes to accepted portions of manuals promptly, but may need to delay the review of accepted material due to higher priority work. If the POI subsequently concludes that an accepted section of a manual is not acceptable, the POI shall formally notify the operator of the deficiency. Upon notification, the operator must take action to resolve the deficiency.

3) **Other Considerations for Manual Changes.** Inspectors shall not limit manual reviews to a strict consideration of the change itself but shall also consider the impact of the change on the operator's overall manual system, training program, and type of operations.

Changes in OpSpecs should be accompanied by a review of applicable sections of the operator's manual.

4) PTRS Input. This activity is considered to be organizational technical administration, and the inspector should record it in the PTRS system as activity code 1303.

C. Manual Reviews During En Route Surveillance. Inspectors conducting en route inspections and ramp inspections should review the flight manual and those portions of the GOM carried by the flightcrew for completeness and currency. When a flight is long enough to make it practical, inspectors should review these manuals more in-depth, particularly those sections that are operationally relevant to the flight in progress. An inspector conducting both cockpit and cabin inspections should check the personal manuals of crewmembers to ensure that all required revisions have been made. Even if a thorough manuals check has been accomplished during an en route surveillance, only one PTRS code may be used. In this case, the code would be 1624 because that is the primary activity. Inspectors should record any discrepancies found with the manuals in section IV, "Comments," on the PTRS Data Sheet.

6-425 PERIODIC REVIEW OF MANUALS. The continual review of an operator's manuals by inspectors is necessary because both the aviation environment and the operations conducted by the operator are constantly changing. Each POI is responsible for developing a surveillance plan for the operator's manual system. At least one major portion of the operator's manual system should be reviewed annually, and the entire manual system should be reviewed over a period of one to three years (depending on the complexity of the operation). This periodic review should be planned as a distinct event according to the direction given by the National Program Guidelines (NPGs). This periodic review should be coordinated between principal inspectors and other inspectors, including geographic, to ensure an appropriate exchange of information and to avoid redundant reviews. This activity is considered to be a surveillance function; therefore, inspectors should enter it as 1621 in the PTRS system.

RESERVED. Paragraphs 6-426 through 6-440.